

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 EB-11 COME-00 XMB-07 AID-20

TRSE-00 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 OTPE-00

DRC-01 /097 W

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R 151319Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7756

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, CG

SUBJECT: COLLINS RADIO AND EDUCATIONAL TV NETWORK

REF: KINSHASA 4063

1. WHEN I SAW THE DIRECTOR OF THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE. BISENGINAMA, MAY 14 HE CONFIRMED SAKOMBI'S STATEMENTS REFTEL. BISENGIMANA SAID COLLINS WOULD HAVE GOOD CHANCE IN COMPETITION WITH THOMSON CFF PROVIDED PRICE REDUCED SOMEWHAT AND FRENCH FINANCING TERMS MET.

2. SUBSEQUENT TO EMBASSY'S TELEPHONE CALL (REFTEL), BISENGIMANA CONVOKED SAKOMBI AND TECHNICAL EXPERTS TO REVIEW BIDS. COLLINS HAD SLIGHT TECHNICAL ADVANTAGE IN POWER OF TRANSMITTERS; HOWEVER, PRICE WAS MUCH HIGHER THAN FRENCH BID. ON OTHER HAND, FRENCH PRICE WAS NOT FIXED, WAS BASED ON DECEMBER 1973 COSTS AND DID NOT COVER SOME ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT. BISENGIMANA SAID BOTH BIDDERS SHOULD NOW REFINE THEIR PROPOSALS IN THE LIGHT OF KINSHASA DISCUSSIONS HELD DURING FIRST WEEK OF MAY.

3. IN CONFIDENCE, BISENGIMANA COMMENTED THAT DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL ORIENTATION AND VOIX DU ZAIRE
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IN PARTICULAR WERE FULL OF FRENCH NATIONALS. FRENCH

TECHNICIANS WROTE SPECIFICATIONS AND THEN EVALUATED BIDS. THIS WAS WHY HE DECIDED REVIEW OFFERS IN THE PRESIDENCY (BISENGIMANA IS AN ELECTRICAL ENGINEER BY PROFESSION). HE INDICATED THAT FRENCH PRICE, AS RESULT DISCUSSIONS CITED ABOVE, WOULD HAVE TO BE INCREASED. HE EXPRESSED HOPE COLLINS PRICE MIGHT BE REDUCED. IN EVENT COLLINS COULD MEET FRENCH FINANCING TERMS, BISENGIMANA THOUGHT PRESIDENT MOBUTU MIGHT BE WILLING OVERLOOK MODEST PRICE DIFFERENTIAL AND AWARD CONTRACT TO COLLINS IN LINE WITH ZAIRE'S POLICY NOT TO BECOME TOO DEPENDENT ON ANY ONE COUNTRY IN ANY ONE FIELD. HE GAVE IMPRESSION THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED SITUATION WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU AND WAS REFLECTING LATTER'S VIEWS.

4. COMMENT: SUGGEST DEPT PASS GIST OF ABOVE TO COLLINS VP STRATHERN OR A. D. PERKINS IN DALLAS (TEL: 214-235-9511). THERE IS NO RPT NO GUARANTEE THAT COLLINS WILL EVENTUALLY BE AWARDED THIS MAJOR CONTRACT. ON OTHER HAND, PROVIDED ABOVE-MENTIONED CONDITIONS CAN BE MET, COLLINS WILL BE ABLE COMPETE ON FAVORABLE TERMS WITH FRENCH FIRM. IF COLLINS BELIEVES CONDITIONS CAN BE MET AND IS INTERESTED IN PURSUING CONTRACT, SUGGEST THEY SEND LETTER TO SAKOMBI WHICH EMBASSY WOULD BE GLAD TO TRANSMIT.
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